Between Old and New Traditions: Transnational Solidarities and the Love for Liverpool FC

Abstract

Arguably, in the last 15 years globalisation fuelled by social media have reshaped how socialisations are fostered and maintained. Moreover, the same processes have had a profound impact on one of the most fundamental emotion of humankind: love. Departing from those assumptions, based on an 18-month (n)ethnography of football supporters of one particular English club in Brazil and Switzerland, I sought to unveil the discourses supporters crafted in relation to their historiographies as cosmopolitan *flâneurs*. The critical discourse analysis showed that they used both individual and collective stories to craft their biographies as *true* Liverpool FC supporters. From those findings I argue that individualisation in cosmopolitan times entails a 'Dasein für ausgewählte Andere', being this other the re-traditionalised structures of modernity. I conclude by pointing out that precarious freedom does not relate to the necessity of choosing, but to their necessity of constantly legitimising their choices.

Keywords: Fandom, Cosmopolitanism, Ontology, Football

Introduction

It is argued by a myriad of social theorists that the later processes of globalisation have had a profound impact on how socialisations are fostered and maintained across time and space (see Bauman, 1998; Beck, 2011, 2016; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, 2008; Beck, Bonss, & Lau, 2003; Robertson, 1990; Tomlinson, 1999). The intensity and vigour of those changes have grown exponentially during the last 15 years with the arrival of new internet and communications technologies, in particular by the pervasiveness of social media on our daily lives (see Miller, 2011; Miller et al., 2016). Amongst the most used social media platforms in the Western world are WhatsApp (launched in 2009), a direct message application that reached 900 million users in 2015 (see Rao, 2015), Instagram (launched in 2010), a photo-sharing application that has more than 400 million users who share 80 millions photos daily (see Instagram, 2016), and their parent company Facebook Inc's mammoth platform - Facebook (launched in 2004), with 1.19 billion active monthly users (see Facebook, 2015). The omnipresence of social media on our quotidian social life has been under the sociological gaze in distinct contexts as with political participation (Bernal, 2006; Castells, 2015; Panagakos & Horst, 2006; Parham, 2004; Shirky, 2011), consumer culture (Belk, 2007, 2013,

2014; Kozinets, 1999; Watkins, Denegri-Knott, & Molesworth, 2016), and more specifically within sport studies (Cleland, 2014, 2015; David & Millward, 2012; Kassing & Sanderson, 2015; Millward, 2008; Petersen-Wagner, 2017a, 2017b; Popp & Woratschek, 2016). Moreover, the social-media-fuelled globalisation has left its scars on one of the most fundamental emotion of humankind: love (Bauman, 2003; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2014). Once unimaginable love relationship arrangements to our parents or grandparents' generations are becoming more habitual to individuals who grew up during the Internet and social media revolutions. Who to love, how to fall and maintain long distance relationships, being together apart and, or apart together, or how to live as a world family with multiple nationalities, ethnicities, religions and languages are all too common questions to this new generation (see Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2014). As I argued previously (see Petersen-Wagner, 2017a), those questions are not only experienced in relation to inter-subject love but those contradictions and anxieties are also felt on how individuals enact their love for a particular football club. What club to love, how to maintain that long distant love alive without a constant physical presence in the stadium, how to learn to appreciate this new love, how to relate to this world family of supporters with all their apparent differences in language, ethnicity, nationality, gender, and social class, are all questions that the cosmopolitan football *flâneur* (see Petersen-Wagner, 2017b) runs into when deciding to follow a particular club.

Departing from those premises, this chapter will look at how those cosmopolitan *flâneurs* construct their historiographies as football supporters of one particular English football club. The chapter will delve into how those geographically distant individuals - based in Switzerland and Brazil - came to support Liverpool FC, the stories and histories behind their 'encounter' with the football club for the first time, their decision to follow and love it rather than other 'competing' clubs, how they came to settle down with the club, their strategies for maintaining this love and passion going on even when they are thousand miles apart, and their constant need for legitimation both locally and globally. In a sense, this chapter builds from David & Millward's (2012) research on the digital re-territorialisation of fandom by focusing on ways of becoming rather than on ways of being. Whilst David & Millward (2012) delved into how the digitalisation of fandom had impacted fan behaviour in regards of following their beloved football club (ways of being), in this chapter I will turn my sociological gaze to how the digitalisation of football allowed fans to support far distant clubs (ways of becoming). The chapter will follow initially with a discussion on the traditional forms of fandom, the ones I have previously identified as related to methodological nationalism (see Petersen-Wagner, 2017a), for then the methods of the empirical research to be presented; on a third moment I will present the supporters' historiographies of both falling and maintaining the love for Liverpool FC; on a fourth moment I will argue that what we are witnessing is a distinct form of individualisation as the one proposed by Beck & Beck-Gernsheim (1996, 2002), especially by the fact that the precarious

freedom condition is related to both being and becoming; I will conclude this chapter by proposing some additional research avenues for the sociology of fandom that takes into consideration not only the Internet and social media revolutions, but also this *sui generis* form of individualisation.

Traditional Football Fandom

Association Football is probably one of the most ubiquitous element of the cultural globalisation that took place between the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. As argued by both Giulianotti & Robertson (2009) and Hobsbawm (1983, 1987), the coming of age of football should be understood as falling within the broad invention of traditions experienced in the heights of modernity in Europe. It was not only football that evolved from a parochial pastime activity to a global sporting phenomenon, but at that time individuals also experienced the invention of other traditions as public holidays, formal public education based on one shared language, a sense of shared history, annual non-religious ceremonies and festivals, and the unveiling of public monuments to name a few. All those different traditions assisted in crystallising class cultures and hierarchies, gender roles, family structures, most importantly the nation-state as the ultimate form of political organisation, and its associated philosophy: nationalism. As pointed out by Hobsbawm (1983), those newly invented traditions of the late 1800s and early 1900s were at the service of the ruling parties and classes in order to address the incipient problem of loyalty bonds between the different individuals under the political influence of the invented nation-states. Those traditions ultimately served as the glue between very distinct individuals who otherwise would have not understood themselves as French, Germans, Italians or British. Football as part of this broad phenomenon was only one more piece in the machinery of/for nationalism, and as such its traditions were a reflection of those times. In order to understand how the cosmopolitan football *flâneur* (Petersen-Wagner, 2017b) subverts those traditions and modifies our understanding of individualisation and the nation-state, I will briefly review below how gender, social class, and a sense of locality were all ingrained in the tradition of defining who is the *authentic* football supporter. This historiographical approach would allow us in a second moment to understand the influences of the digital revolution on football, and especially on how this digital revolution allows individuals around the world to become supporters of any particular club.

Football as we know today was a by-product of two very important principles of late 1800s English society: the public school and muscular Christianity (Mason, 1980). Historically, both of those principles served to preserve society in order by infusing new generations with the desirable traits that ultimately assisted with the British imperial enterprise (see Hughson, 2009; Magee &

Thompson, 2010). Moreover, those principles not only maintained society in order, but were especially intended to preserve order in society by engendering clear social roles and hierarchies on the lines of gender and social class. Similarly to other activities shaped for the consumption in public as the public house (Collins & Vamplew, 2002), football was intended for the enjoyment of solely the public: namely the working men. As argued by Giulianotti (1999) and Peterson & Robinson (2012) women's participation as public spectators of football was only reserved to middle-class women and this was much the norm and tradition until the 1960s (Pope, 2017; Toffoletti & Mewett, 2012). The hegemonic masculinity encountered in football is pervasive in all dimensions of the game, from participation and spectatorship to fan culture, languages and mannerism (Giulianotti, 1999). In the digital consumption of football, it was not until the 2016 edition that FIFA's official video game - developed by Electronic Arts - allowed players to control female athletes and contest with female national teams - the game is still to allow players to control female clubs. The historical make of football as a common ground for male hegemony is better understood and stressed when the notion of the *authentic* supporter is equated to masculinity (Erhart, 2013; Jones, 2008; Pope, 2011). In that sense, the *traditional* supporter is not only perceived to be man, but also theorised as so within the sociology of sport (see Dunning, Murphy, & Waddington, 1991; Giulianotti, 2002; King, 1997a, 1997b; Taylor, 1971).

As aforementioned, the *authentic* supporter was not solely understood as being male but especially of being a working-class man (Giulianotti, 1999). Historically, as argued by Mason (1980, p. 150), the football crowd by the 1910s was already majorly composed by working class men but that was not the feature in the late 1800s, when it was not only more diverse in respect of occupation but also in regards of gender. The predominance of working class men within stadia, especially in the context of British football, found its apogee in the decades after the second world war. At the same time, we see the incipient academic literature on football fandom being produced (see Taylor, 1971), which ended by reifying the belief that working class men were the *traditional* and *authentic* supporters. Although, the historical occupation composition of the crowd can not be disputed, the approach favoured by academics at the point in time - research being done with supporters who attended games in stadia - ended by silencing supporters who were not in the public and followed the sport through other means. This latter point is particular relevant when we imagine the role of traditional media (ie newspapers, magazines, radio, and TV) in allowing individuals to support a particular club from distance (see Farred, 2002; Nash, 2000b), but it becomes even more relevant when we accept the pervasiveness of social and digital media in our daily lives (see Miller et al., 2016). Nevertheless, it was not this incipient work on football fandom that crystallised the notion that fans were homogeneously working class, but it came through the critical work developed from the early 1990s after the creation of the English Premier League. The further commercialisation and

mediatisation of the game, aligned with the neoliberal turn in English politics since the government of Margaret Thatcher (1979-1990), led to distinct academics to question the changes imposed on football and how those changes would impact crowd composition (see Giulianotti, 2002; Giulianotti, 2005; King, 1997a, 1997b, 1998; Nash, 2000a; Walsh & Giulianotti, 2001). As such, by focusing on the supposedly *losers* of this further commercialisation and digitalisation/mediatisation of football, those authors ended by reifying working class men as the true custodians of the game. Non-working class men, women, and families came to be understood as *new* fans in contrast opposition to the perceived homogeneous group of *traditional* and *authentic* working class supporters.

The last characteristic reified by silencing the other - the one who do not follow football through *traditional* means - is the pinnacle of methodological nationalism (see Beck, 2007), namely that the *authentic* supporter has a longstanding local attachment to *his* favourite club. As argued by Beck (2007) and echoed by Urry (2008) sociology was inherently linked to the understanding of propinquitous socialisations, blinding itself to other forms of socialisations that did not focus on the immediate presence with others. As such, the *traditional* and *authentic* supporter came to be regarded within the sociology of sport as the one who on a weekly basis interacted with like-minded individuals in pubs or within stadia (see Giulianotti, 2002; King, 1997a). This constant physical interaction came to be understood through the notion of topophilic attachments those supporters would create to their *home* ground or *local* pub as seen in the works of Giulianotti (2002), King (1997a), and Bromberger (2001). Nevertheless, as pointed out by distinct authors (see David & Millward, 2012; Farred, 2002; Hayton, Millward, & Petersen-Wagner, 2017; Hognestad, 2000; Nash, 2000b; Petersen-Wagner, 2017a, 2017b) football fandom can come in different forms, especially when taking locality into consideration. Moreover, what those aforementioned authors sought to show was that supporting can take place through mediated forms (TV, newspapers, Internet), rather than solely relying on the constant presence in the ground. In a sense, those authors focused on how football's media and digital revolutions ended by altering ways of supporting, either by looking at the pervasiveness of illegal streaming in pubs (see David & Millward, 2012), the ability to follow and support distant clubs (see Farred, 2002; Hognestad, 2000; Nash, 2000b; Petersen-Wagner, 2017a, 2017b), or the focus put by clubs into attracting long distant supporters (see Hayton et al., 2017).

In that manner, what the previous discussion sought to illuminate was how academically *traditional* and *authentic* were equated to the point that supporters who failed to have a perfect fit with this yardstick tended to be regarded as *less authentic*. As such, it becomes imperative to sociologically ask ourselves how the digital revolution allowed those *less authentic* supporters to initially become supporters (ways of becoming) and then how this revolution morphed their fan practices (ways of being). Whilst the latter has been researched by distinct academics (see David &

Millward, 2012; Giulianotti & Robertson, 2007; Petersen-Wagner, 2017a, 2017b), the former is yet to be discussed in the light of the theory of attainment (see Miller et al., 2016).

Methods

Between February 2013 and June 2014 I was a member of two Liverpool FC supporters Facebook groups, one intended for members of one of the official Swiss branches - what I would call in my work as the Switzerland Reds[1] - and another intended for members of the official Brazilian branch - what I would call as Brazil Reds. Following the rhetorical question Markham (2013) asks in her paper - what would Bronislaw Malinowski do in our moment in time in respect of social media and Internet - I sought to understand through online participant observation how those different individuals enacted and lived their passion for Liverpool FC without a constant physical presence with other supporters, or at Anfield - Liverpool's home ground. As such, I followed the growing academic methodological literature that seeks to discuss the adaptation of current research methods to the pervasiveness of social media on our daily lives. Different authors understand those accommodations in diverse manners, as either calling it online ethnography (see Kendall, 2002; Markham, 1998), virtual ethnography (see Hine, 2000), or netnography (see Kozinets, 2006, 2015). For the purpose of not differentiating, and thus possibly creating hierarchies between *real* ethnography and *online* ethnography, I will refer to the method in this work as ethnographic-inspired. Alongside my participant observation on both Facebook groups that involved reading and engaging in the multiple threads created on those groups, I have also met with Switzerland Reds' members both in Switzerland - where we watched three games together in different cities and pubs - and in Liverpool when we attended two matches at Anfield. In regards to Brazil Reds' members, I have also interviewed through the Facebook chat resource 20 members - interviews ranging from one hour to two hours - that led to over 100,000 words of interview material. In a sense, the digital revolution not only allows supporters to follow their long distant love (see discussion below), it also allows researchers to conduct ethnographic-inspired research in multiple geographical locations at the same time. Whilst being based in England at the time of the research, I was able to follow constantly and concomitantly Liverpool supporters in two distinct localities (Switzerland and Brazil). In a world where time for conducting longitudinal participatory research becomes even scarcer, especially when it involves living and engaging with individuals who live in a different location from where the researcher is from, or when funds for conducting those long scale research are not widely available,

[1] Both supporters' group names have been changed to uphold participants' rights to confidentiality, as well as all interviewees' names have been changed to uphold their rights to confidentiality

the ethnographic-inspired research conducted in both *online* and *offline* situations offers researchers an ability to overcome those setbacks. Moreover, if we accept that social media is pervasive to human life (see Miller, 2011; Miller et al., 2016) it is imperative that our sociological gaze is also directed to socialisations that take place in both digital (*online*) and *offline* situations.

The multiple data I collected - online and offline participant observation notes; and interviews - underwent a critical discourse analysis by employing Chouliaraki & Fairclough's (1999) four steps method. By applying the framework developed by Chouliaraki & Fairclough (1999) I was able to understand how those supporters lived and experienced their positions as *long distant* supporters, but most importantly how they constructed discursively their experiences in contrast to the aforementioned notion of what is to be an *authentic* and *traditional* supporter. The four steps method starts by focusing on a social wrong, and as I argued previously (Petersen-Wagner, 2017a) the notion of not being considered an *authentic* supporter might not appear to be as significant as other injustices as poverty, religion, death, law, nevertheless it is subjectively and ontologically important for the daily lives of those supporters I encountered during the 18 months period. The second step is of identifying the obstacles of addressing the social wrong, and in this research I understand that the over reliance on propinquity socialisations on football fandom theorisations might have academically blinded researchers to other distinct forms of enacting the love for a football club. The third step in Chouliaraki & Fairclough's (1999) critical discourse analysis is of asking if the social order needs the social wrong to maintain itself, and as I sought to show in the previous section the way we understand *authentic* fandom ends by reinforcing social hierarchies on the lines of gender, social class, and location/nationality. The final fourth step is of identifying possible ways past those social wrong, and as I will argue at the end of this chapter what is needed for the social sciences, and especially for the sociology of sport, is a cosmopolitan turn impregnated by a Global South perspective.

Newly Invented Traditions

During the fieldwork with both in Switzerland Reds and Brazil Reds, one of the initial findings that I encountered was that supporters utilised love as a metaphor to explain their relationships to Liverpool FC (see Petersen-Wagner, 2015, 2017a, 2017b). Supposing that this love as metaphor is somehow similar to inter-subject love relationships (see Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995, 2014; Eckhart, 2013), I sought to understand initially how those individuals fell in love with the club. In a sense, I was seeking to understand their way of becoming a Liverpool FC supporter. Discursively, as I will show below, those fans relied both on individualised and collective stories to craft their biographies as *true* supporters of the club. Moreover, when speaking - or chatting on Facebook - to

those supporters I met, on multiple occasions they explained their strategies to maintain this passion alive even without a constant physical co-existence with the club (see Petersen-Wagner, 2017a).

The Individualised Love

As argued by Beck & Beck-Gernsheim (1995) the way that we understand and experience love came to revolutionise the patterns of family formation in Western democracies. Love, in this sense, became a liberating force from what traditional norms and conventions dictated individuals to follow. Furthermore, what love came to revolutionise was not only family structure, but above all the role individuals had in choosing their own biographies. A second revolution in regards of love can be said to be operating within the realm of social media (see Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2014), fuelling distinct forms of family structures and individualisation. In this regard, love becomes one of the driving forces in what Beck & Beck-Gernsheim (1993, 1996, 2002) conceptualised as institutionalised individualism, or the ability to choose to which institutions to adhere to. Deciding who to love, for how long, and why to continue or start to love became all questions individuals face on a daily basis, rather than being given to them when they were born. Thus, institutionalised individualism departs from the principle that individuals continue to be related to different social structures, being them the family, social class, nationality, social clubs, but instead of those structures being given at birth they are now required to choose which to adhere to. Nevertheless, as pointed out by Bauman (2003) on some moments the questions related to individuals choices do not have an answer until they are queried about it, in a sense that their explanations become a rationalisation of an irrational choice. This can be better seen in the below quote from Vicente, one of the Brazil Reds' members.

> "Well, I can't remember when I became a Scouser [. . .] I can't remember when I really started following the club [. . .] I didn't became a kopite because of trend as it happens with the likes of [Manchester] United, Chelsea, [Manchester] City or Arsenal. It was by chance, even more because we haven't won anything in ages." (Vicente)

This above quote from Vicente is emblematic not only by the way he refers to the rationalisation of loving Liverpool, but especially by his use of trends as an element in his narrative to show authenticity. As argued by Giulianotti (2002), *flâneur*-type of spectators - the ones which Vicente might have been classified as, because of his transnational-mediated love - tend to decide which club to follow based on trends that are potentialise by this hyperdigitisation. Nevertheless, as Vicente argues he decided to support Liverpool just by accident, especially because the club has not

won any major trophies in the past few years. This notion of serendipity found in Vicente's quote was also encountered when I spoke to Maria, another Brazil Reds' member. In the quote below, Maria seeks to rationalise how she realised she had fell in love with the club.

> "I always tell everyone, when they ask me that [why she supported LFC], is that I haven't chosen Liverpool, Liverpool chose me by destiny. It was simple, I was watching the Champions League final in 2007, I liked football, but didn't follow much, well I was watching the game and Liverpool fascinated me so much that at the end of the game, when we lost, I was crying my eyes out and didn't knew why." (Maria)

Interesting in this quote from Maria is the idea that chance, destiny, and serendipity do not only depart from the individual but can also depart from the club. It was not her deciding to support Liverpool, but it was actually Liverpool who captivated her to the point she was crying after the game. Those moments when supporters in both Brazil Reds and Switzerland Reds came to realise they were actually in love with the club tended to be related to situations that would be considered as extraordinary, escaping from what norms and customs would otherwise have dictated them to do (see Petersen-Wagner, 2015). Moreover, what those above quotes highlight are the possible distinction between the notion of individualism - a rational-oriented goal seeker and profit maximisation individual - to individualisation (see Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002), in the sense that those supporters ended just consciously understanding their decisions *à posteriori*. This notion of being unable to rationalise their choices is better encapsulated by the quote below from Carla (Brazil Reds).

> "[. . .] you will reach the conclusion, if you haven't reached yet, that football we cannot explain why we support a team, [. . .] we [just] feel [. . .] football and love are the same. We get beaten but we continue to love it." (Carla)

What Carla can summarise in a few words is the idea that what got them to love the club was not something given to them by custom or norms, but also it was not a decision that they rationalised in order to find the best possible outcome. The Brazil Reds and Switzerland Reds I have spoken with during the ethnographic-inspired research ended rationalising their decisions in order to try to explain me what I was asking them in the first place. Nevertheless, as Carla pointed out the reasons for supporting a club are similar with reasons for loving someone, meaning that they were somehow unable to express in words those feelings that surfaced during extraordinary moments. Moreover, what all those above quotes point out is that their decision to love Liverpool FC was to all its intends and purposes an individual journey of discovery. As I have argued previously (see Petersen-Wagner,

2017b) Liverpool was not the first club they got in contact with, but it became the first club they actually fell in love with, in the sense that those supporters I met were in this life-long journey of discovering their individual love.

The Collective Love

Nevertheless, not all of the extraordinary situations described by both Brazil Reds or Switzerland Reds reflected only their own individual journey of discovery. In certain circumstances their individual stories were combined with stories of other individuals who came to play a significant part in their decisions to support the club. For instance, Adele (one of my main informants from the Switzerland Reds' group) - who was not a keen football supporter at the time when she saw Liverpool playing for the first time - had been invited by Edgard (her fiancé to be) for an away weekend in Liverpool that within the many activities included a game at Anfield. Her decision at that moment in time was of either going and accepting that the trip included a 90min football match at Anfield, or not going and maybe losing Edgard. Adele chose the former, and not only her love relationship grew stronger with Edgard, it also became a massive love relationship with Liverpool. In this sense, even that Adele had the possibility of choosing - the precarious freedom notion as argued by Beck & Beck-Gernsheim (1996) - her choices were to some extent directed by what others had already chosen before. This was also a feature with Brazil Reds' members as it can be seen in the below quote from Antônio.

> *"*I support Liverpool, and I really support them, *because of the influence of one of my uncles*, who showed me The Beatles when I was still a kid. And as I have always been crazy for football, I went to research which teams they had in the land of The Beatles." (Antônio, emphasis added)

As Antônio highlights, his decision to support Liverpool FC came as an unintended consequence of his initial passion for The Beatles, and this in retrospect was something that was already influenced by someone else. As such, Antônio's individual story of loving the club becomes entangled with his passion for a band, and ultimately by his uncle passion for this band. Thus, his choices are not only part of an individual journey but also have a notion of a collective unintended enterprise. In similar fashion, when looking at Carla's (Brazil Reds) below quote it is possible to perceive the idea that those individual decisions as presented in the above section can also be permeated by other individual's decisions in a way that adds further complexity to the situation.

> "I love The Beatles since I was 8, *my cousins that introduced me to the beatlemania*. So in 2011 after I finished Uni I backpacked around Europe and went to Liverpool [because of The Beatles]. *My cousin supported Liverpool* (nowadays she supports Arsenal lol) and we ended buying tickets for the game against Bolton. *It was after that that I started liking Liverpool*." (Carla, emphasis added)

Unintentionally, Carla got in contact with Liverpool FC whilst in a trip with her cousin who was the one who got her in love with The Beatles and the city of Liverpool. Her precarious freedom of attending the game was then connected to prior decisions made by her cousin. It is interesting to note that the individual who made the initial decision that had unintentionally repercussions on Carla's choices ended changing herself to support Arsenal. Nevertheless, Carla continued supporting Liverpool. Additionally, Brazil Reds and Switzerland Reds' members became focal points in shaping other individual's precarious freedom as it is possible to recognise in the below quote from Luis.

> "*I have friends that started supporting Liverpool afterwards because of me*. Lots came to know the team because they knew someone that supported Liverpool. My nickname at Uni was Liverpool." (Luis, emphasis added)

The connection between the individual identity and Liverpool as a place that Luis remarked in the above quote was epitomised during the Facebook chat when he proudly showed me pictures of his different Liverpool FC-themed tattoos. Luis, an avid supporter, had travelled over 20h by bus to attend live streaming Liverpool games in Rio de Janeiro, and those deeds performed by him were the fundamental reasons by which others would identify him by the club's name. Having said that, what is important in this quote is that idea that Luis became a central figure in shaping other individuals' precarious freedom. A quote that encapsulates this notion of an interrelated individual and collective love that challenges the traditional way of understanding authentic fandom is the one below from Percival when he ended influencing his father to support Liverpool. In this sense his discourse is relevant as it points to a direction where both individual and collective constructions are interrelated in generating a different historiography where the son influences the father in some sort of inverted patriarchy.

> "Interviewer: do you watch with anyone? or by yourself?
> Percival: *I normally watch the games with my father*
> Interviewer: does he support Liverpool too? Or is he neutral?
> Percival: yes, he supports Liverpool

Interviewer: because of you?
Percival: *yes, he always watched the games with me, so he ended liking the club too*" (Percival, emphasis added)

Re-traditionalising Football Fandom

As presented in the above section, Brazil Reds and Switzerland Reds' members shared similar cultural stories in relation to their historiography of becoming in love with the football club. Moreover, what those stories challenged were the way authentic fandom is understood in both academic and non-academic circles. What was common in their discourses was this notion of their choices being both individual options and also part of a wider collective resolution. Furthermore, as highlighted above they were not rationalist individuals seeking profit-maximising outcomes as individualism and the notion of *Homo Economicus* might have predicted, but they were closer to what Beck & Beck-Gernsheim (2002) identified as one of the characteristics of reflexive modernisation: institutional individualisation. Moreover, as I argued somewhere else (see Petersen-Wagner, 2017b) those supporters by espousing this fluid condition of individualisation in the figure of the cosmopolitan *flâneur* differed from the more stable notion of Giulianotti's (2002) *flâneur* who is indebted linked to rational individualism. Nevertheless, for Beck & Beck-Gernsheim (2002) institutional individualisation meant the shift from a given story/history, shaped by the institutions of modernity as the nuclear family, the nation-state, and the class system, to a more fluid condition where individuals would be crafters of their own biographies (*Bastelbiographie*), in the sense that they would be able to pick and match to which institutions to be adhered to. As such, Beck & Beck-Gernsheim (2002) argued that institutional individualisation whilst presenting individuals with the freedom to choose, ultimately fashioned a scenario where they were obliged to make those choices - the precarious freedom of institutional individualisation. Building up from the notion that those supporters need to constantly legitimise their ontological existence in respect of how they are perceived as *authentic* (see Petersen-Wagner, 2017a), my argument in this chapter is that institutional individualisation not only relates to the precarious freedom of choosing, but ultimately to the precarious freedom of being, or what I conceptualised here as being-for-a-chosen-other (*Dasein für ausgewählte Andere*). The idea of being-for-a-chosen-other encompasses both ontological aspects of being and becoming, in a way that those individuals I spoke to used discursively their way of becoming - the individual and collective stories - as anchors for their way of being (for a full discussion on the ways of being see Petersen-Wagner, 2017a).

Those supporters I spoke to during the ethnographic-inspired research when mentioning their individual historiography as Liverpool FC supporters were in a sense aligned to Beck & Beck-

Gernsheim's (2002) notion of institutional individualisation. Whilst making their individual choices and thus crafting their individual historiographies as supporters, they were actively challenging the traditional norms and customs that culturally stipulate what is understood as *authenticity* in respect of following a football club. As the stories above show, this was only achievable due to this hyperdigitisation of football and other cultural phenomena that allowed those individuals to be in physical and metaphysical contact with an array of options, which eventually became Liverpool FC. As I argued above, gender, social class, and locality are all too important factors in establishing who is perceived to be authentic or who is to be considered a *new* fan. When those supporters I spoke to related their historiographies to serendipity or accident, they were to a degree challenging initially the idea that following a football club is not a choice (it is given by your position in respect of locality, gender, and social class), and secondly that if it is a choice then it should have been a rationalised one. Moreover, when those supporters mention female influences in their stories they are actively challenging the aforementioned patriarchal arrangement of football fandom. Above all, their practices as distant supporters are actively challenging the belief in locality as a determinant of authenticity, and this as I argued somewhere else (Petersen-Wagner, 2015) happens both 'locally' (where they are physically situated) and 'globally' (in Liverpool). In a sense, all those individualised practices that took place whilst supporters were crafting their own biographies can be said to be within the de-traditionalising movement as postulated by Beck, Bonns & Lau (2003). The unintended meta-changes shaped by those initial individualised choices not only challenge the traditional norms and customs associated with modernity, but inaugurates the path for understanding how those institutions and possible transnational solidarities are re-traditionalised.

Consequently, institutional individualisation should not only focus on the de-traditionalising aspect but chiefly on how those practices can re-traditionalise institutions and solidarities (Beck et al., 2003). Seeing in that way, the notion of *Bastelbiographie* (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002) ends by not reflecting the entire process of reflexive modernisation by falling to take into account the unintended consequences of those precarious choices. In that regard, I propose that by understanding precarious freedom as not only related to choices but also to ways of being (*Dasein für ausgewählte Andere*) it is possible to envision how institutions and solidarities are re-traditionalised. Supporters when crafting their own individualised biographies coupled them with others' historiographies in a manner that original ways of understanding *authenticity* become re-traditionalised. What traditionally was seen as the norm when individuals started following a football club based on their position in respect of gender, social class, and locality is now being coupled with aspects of other general popular consumer culture manifestations. The erosion of the traditional boundaries that once limited the political, cultural, and economical spheres as argued by Beck (2005), are also seen here when locality is coupled with a particular consumer culture phenomenon - The Beatles - that (re)creates a distinct

meaning for what we understand by local. Thus, locality not only reflects individuals physical position in time/space but also how that place is imagined through different consumer culture manifestations. Moreover, locality is also decoupled from this constant physical presence in the club's home ground and becomes a more fluid understanding of being in constant metaphysical contact with the club (see Petersen-Wagner, 2017a, 2017b). This constant metaphysical contact with the club and other supporters is only possible by the pervasiveness of social media in their lives, as it allows those individuals to maintain long distance solidarities that transpose the physical barriers imposed by their apparent remotenesses. In a sense, social media allows those individuals to engage in different forms of fan activities that could be considered unimaginable some decades ago, as supporting-apart-together (see Petersen-Wagner, 2015). From its part, gender roles are re-imagined and re-traditionalised through a wider and more inclusive conception where not only women are regarded as authentic supporters (see Petersen-Wagner, 2017a), but also become the influencers in shaping the precarious choices of those supporters I met. In a sense, the challenges to the hegemonic masculinity found within this football fan culture relate not only to de-traditionalising who is perceived to be authentic, but especially to re-traditionalising authenticity through a shared notion of recognition through love (see Honneth, 1996; Petersen-Wagner, 2017a). Moreover, being for this chosen other also re-traditionalises the once linear conception of following a football club, where your forefathers are the sole reason for igniting solidarities. Similar to Beck, Bonns & Lau's (2003) notion of the multiplicity of boundaries in reflexive modernity, what being for a chosen other ultimately entails is the acceptance of the multiplicity of ways of drawing the lines - or reasons - for supporting a football club. The once linear understanding of authenticity is put into question by this multiplicity that takes into account numerous precarious freedom choices that inherently originate multiple unintended consequences. In a sense, being for a chosen other opens the pandora box that would allow us to explore the multiple and sometimes contradictory accounts of fandom, in a way that the lines between *authentic* and *non-authentic* cease to be the primary site for understanding fan culture, and it is replaced by the acts of drawing those lines. Additionally, what the digital and social media revolutions add to those acts is another layer of complexity by transposing the physical goalposts to possible metaphysical ones, thus shifting the once linear understanding of locality to a more fluid one. Watching football at home, in a pub, or in any stadia cease to be the dividing lines between *authenticity* and *non-authenticity*, to give passage to understanding what really happens on those different places and how *authentic* enactments of fandom can take multiple contradictory forms. As such, whilst *Bastelbiographie* would be inherently connected to understanding the actual lines for *authenticity* - a more static way of imagining institutional individualisation -, *Dasein für ausgewählte Andere* is more concerned with the sometimes unstable and conflicting drawing of those lines by focusing on the constant struggle for ontological recognition. In a sense, *Dasein für ausgewählte*

Andere becomes a more dynamic concept that takes into consideration not only the act of choosing, but engages with the unintended consequences of those precarious choices in both individual and collective levels, and most importantly re-focus the sociological imagination to how the unintended consequences of those precarious choices are constantly ontologically experienced in search for recognition.

Conclusions

In the last fifteen years the social media fuelled globalisation created a profound schism on our once traditional certainties in respect of what is understood as viable and possible solidarities. This schism has not only de-traditionalised our certainties by bringing into discussion the once accepted norms and customs that were based on the traditional institutions of modernity as the ones arranged by social class, gender roles, and ultimately the nation-state. This schism unintentionally led to a re-traditionalisation of those institutions shaping our own understanding of how solidarities are fostered and maintained across time and space. As I showed in this research, what the social media fuelled globalisation was able to achieve was of challenging the once *acceptable* norms that dictated our own understanding of *authenticity* in respect of football fandom. Moreover, if it is accepted that institutional individualisation is one of the features of reflexive modernity, thus this process needs to be sociologically imagined through what I conceptualised as *Dasein für ausgewählte Andere*. This distinct form of imagining individualisation adds to our sociological repertoires by emphasising not only the precarious choices that individuals experience in their lives, but above all focus on how those individuals face the unintended consequences of their choices in their ontological legitimisation praxis. In a sense, this distinct way of imagining individualisation seeks to reconcile both the individual and the collective, stressing that those decisions and their unintended outcomes are experienced through complex interconnections. In light of that, when taking this novel sociological imagination lens to the particular case of the digital consumption of football, and especially to the ways football fandom is enacted *online*/*offline*, the attention should shift from the actual diving lines *per se*, to how those lines are constantly being drawn by individuals and the collective. What means to be supporting *physically alone* or *metaphysically together*, what means to be *authentic* or *plastic*, what means to be *physically here* or *metaphysically there*, and what means to be *supporting a club* after all becomes questions that need to be answered based on this constant drawing of lines. The digital and social media revolutions then open this distinct pandora box for social researchers interested in understanding how solidarities emerge and sustain themselves across time and most importantly space.

References

Bauman, Z. (1998). Globalization: The Human Consequences (1st ed.). London: Polity.

Bauman, Z. (2003). Liquid Love: On the Frailty of Human Bonds (1st ed.). Cambridge: Polity Press.

Beck, U. (2005). The Cosmopolitan State: Redefining Power in the Global Age. *International Journal of Politics, Culture & Society, 18*, 143-159. doi:10.1007/s10767-006-9001-1

Beck, U. (2007). The Cosmopolitan Condition: Why Methodological Nationalism Fails. *Theory, Culture & Society, 24*(7-8), 286-290. doi:10.1177/0263276407024007250 5

Beck, U. (2011). Cosmopolitanism as Imagined Communities of Global Risk. *American Behavioral Scientist, 55*(10), 1346-1361.

Beck, U. (2016). The Metamorphosis of the World. Cambridge: Polity.

Beck, U., & Beck-Gernsheim, E. (1993). Nicht Autonomie, sondern Bastelbiographie: Anmerkungen zur Individualisierungdiskussion am Beispiel des Aufsatzes von Guenter Burkart. *Zeitschrisft fur Soziologies, 22*(3), 178-187.

Beck, U., & Beck-Gernsheim, E. (1995). *The Normal Chaos of Love* (M. Ritter & J. Wiebel, Trans. 1st ed.). London: Polity Press.

Beck, U., & Beck-Gernsheim, E. (1996). Individualization and 'Precarious Freedom': Perspectives and Controversies of a Subject-oriented Sociology. In P. Heelas, S. Lash, & P. Morris (Eds.), *Detraditionalization* (pp. 23-48). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Beck, U., & Beck-Gernsheim, E. (2002). *Individualization* (P. Camiller, Trans.). London: Sage.

Beck, U., & Beck-Gernsheim, E. (2008). Global Generations and the Trap of Methodological Nationalism For a Cosmopolitan Turn in the Sociology of Youth and Generation. *European Sociological Review, 25*(1), 25-36. doi:10.1093/esr/jcn032

Beck, U., & Beck-Gernsheim, E. (2014). *Distant Love* (R. Livingstone, Trans. 1st ed.). Cambridge: Polity Press.

Beck, U., Bonss, W., & Lau, C. (2003). The Theory of Reflexive Modernization: problematic, hypothesis and research programme. *Theory, Culture & Society, 20*(2), 1-33.

Belk, R. W. (2007). Why Not Share Rather Than Own? The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 611(1), 126-140.

Belk, R. W. (2013). Extended Self in a Digital World. *Journal of Consumer Research, 40*(3), 477-500.

Belk, R. W. (2014). You are what you can access: Sharing and collaborative consumption online. *Journal of Business Research, 67*(8), 1595-1600.

Bernal, V. (2006). Diaspora, Cyberspace and Political Imagination: The Eritrean Diaspora Online. *Global Networks, 6*(2), 161-179.

Bromberger, C. (2001). Le Match de Football: Ethnologie d'une passion partisane à Marseille, Naples et Turin (3rd ed.). Paris: Éditions de la Maison des ciences de l'homme.

Castells, M. (2015). Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Polity Press.

Chouliaraki, L., & Fairclough, N. (1999). Discourse in Late Modernity: Rethinking Critical Discourse Analysis (1st ed.). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Cleland, J. (2014). Racism, Football Fans, and Online Message Boards: How Social Media Has added a New Dimension to Racist Discourse in English Football. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues, 38*(5), 415-431.

Cleland, J. (2015). Discussing homossexuality on association football fan message boards: A changing cultural context. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 50*(2), 125-140.

Collins, T., & Vamplew, W. (2002). Mud, Sweat and Beers: A Cultural History of Sport and Alcohol (1st ed.). Oxford: Berg.

David, M., & Millward, P. (2012). Football's Coming Home?: Digital reterritorialization, contradictions in the transnational coverage of sport and the sociology of alternative football broadcasts. *British Journal of Sociology, 63*(2), 349-369.

Dunning, E., Murphy, P., & Waddington, I. (1991). Anthropological versus sociological approaches to the study of soccer hooliganism: some critical notes. *The Sociological Review, 39*(3), 459-478.

Eckhart, M. (2013). *L'Amour est Fort comme La Mort* (P. Petit, Trans. 1st ed.). Paris: Gallimard.

Erhart, I. (2013). Ladies of Besiktas: A Dismantling of Male Hegemony at Inönü Stadium. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 48*(1), 83-98.

Facebook. (2015). *2014 Annual Report*. Retrieved from http://investor.fb.com/annuals.cfm

Farred, G. (2002). Long Distance Love: Growing up a Liverpool Football Club fan. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues, 26*(1), 6-24.

Giulianotti, R. (1999). Football: a sociology of the global game. London: Polity Press.

Giulianotti, R. (2002). Supporters, Followers, Fans, and Flaneurs: A Taxonomy of Spectator Identities in Football. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues, 26*(1), 25-46.

Giulianotti, R. (2005). Sport Spectators and the Social Consequences of Commodification: Critical Perspectives from Scottish Football. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues, 29*(4), 386-410. doi:10.1177/0193723505280530

Giulianotti, R., & Robertson, R. (2007). Forms of Glocalization: Globalization and the Migration Strategies of Scottish Football Fans in North America. *Sociology, 41*(1), 133-152.

Giulianotti, R., & Robertson, R. (2009). *Globalization & Football* (1st ed.). London: Sage.

Hayton, J. W., Millward, P., & Petersen-Wagner, R. (2017). Chasing a Tiger in a network society? Hull City's proposed name change in the pursuit of China and East Asia's new middle class consumers. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 52*(3), 279-298.

Hine, C. (2000). *Virtual Ethnography* (1st ed.). London: Sage.

Hobsbawm, E. (1983). Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914. In E. Hobsbawm & T. Ranger (Eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (pp. 263-307). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hobsbawm, E. (1987). The Age of Empire: 1875-1914. London: Abacus.

Hognestad, H. K. (2000). Satellite Transmitted Passion: A Study of Norwegians Relationship to English Football. *Idrett, Samfunn og Frivillig Organisering*, 113-121.

Honneth, A. (1996). The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts (J. Anderson, Trans. 1st ed.). Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hughson, J. (2009). The middle class, colonialism and the making of sport. *Sport in Society, 12*(1), 69-84.

Instagram. (2016). Press Release. Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/press/?hl=en

Jones, K. W. (2008). Female Fandom: Identity, Sexism, and Men's Professional Football in England. *Sociology of Sport Journal, 25*, 516-537.

Kassing, J. W., & Sanderson, J. (2015). Playing in the New Media Game or Riding the Virtual Bench: Confirming and Disconfirming Membership in the Community of Sport. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues, 39*(1), 3-18.

Kendall, L. (2002). Hanging out in the Virtual Pub: Masculinities and Relationships Online (1st ed.). Berkeley: University of California Press.

King, A. (1997a). The Lads: Masculinity and the New Consumption of Football. *Sociology, 31*(2), 329-346.

King, A. (1997b). New Directors, Customers, and Fans: The Transformation of English Football in the 1990s. *Sociology of Sport Journal, 14*(3), 224-240.

King, A. (1998). The End of Terraces: The Transformation of English Football in the 1990s (1st ed.). London: Leicester University Press.

Kozinets, R. V. (1999). E-Tribalized Marketing?: The Strategic Implications of Virtual Communities of Consumption. *European Journal of Marketing, 17*(3), 252-264.

Kozinets, R. V. (2006). Netnography 2.0. In R. W. Belk (Ed.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods in Marketing* (pp. 129-142). Northampton, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Kozinets, R. V. (2015). *Netnography Redifined* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.

Magee, G. B., & Thompson, A. S. (2010). Empire and Globalisation: Networks of People, Goods and Capital in the British World, c. 1850-1914 (1st ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Markham, A. (1998). Life Online: Researching Real Experiences in Virtual Space (1st ed.). London: Altamira Press.

Markham, A. (2013). Fieldwork in Social Media: What would Malinowski do? *Journal of Qualitative Communication Research, 2*(4), 434-446.

Mason, T. (1980). Association Football and English Society: 1863-1915 (1st ed.). Sussex: The Harvester Press.

Miller, D. (2011). *Tales from Facebook* (1st ed.). Cambridge: Polity Press.

Miller, D., Costa, E., Haynes, N., McDonald, T., Nicolescu, R., Sinanan, J., . . . Wang, X. (Eds.). (2016). *How the World Changed Social Media*. London: UCL Press.

Millward, P. (2008). The Rebirth of the Football Fanzine: Using E-zines as Data Source. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues, 32*(3), 299-310.

Nash, R. (2000a). Contestation in Modern English Professional Football: The Independent Supporters Association Movement. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 35*(4), 465-486.

Nash, R. (2000b). Globalised Football Fandom: Scandinavian Liverpool FC Supporters. *Football Studies, 3*(2), 5-23.

Panagakos, A., & Horst, H. A. (2006). Return to Cyberia: Technology and the Social Worlds of Transnational Migrants. *Global Networks, 6*(2), 109-124.

Parham, A. A. (2004). Diaspora, Community and Communication: Internet Use in Transnational Haiti. *Global Networks, 4*(2), 199-217.

Petersen-Wagner, R. (2015). Cosmopolitan Fandom: A Critical Postcolonial Analysis of Liverpool FC's Supporters Discourses in Brazil and Switzerland. (PhD), Durham University, Durham, Durham. Retrieved from http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/11235/

Petersen-Wagner, R. (2017a). Cultural Consumption through the Epistemologies of the South: 'Humanization' in transnational football fan solidarities. *Current Sociology, 65*(7), 953-970.

Petersen-Wagner, R. (2017b). The Football Supporter in a Cosmopolitan Epoch. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues, 41*(2), 133-150.

Peterson, R., & Robinson, D. (2012). Excavations and the afterlife of a professional football stadium, Peel Park, Accrington, Lancashire: towards an archaeology of football. *World Archeology, 44*(2), 263-279.

Pope, S. (2011). 'Like pulling down Durham Cathedral and building a brothel': Women as 'new consumer' fans? *International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 46*(4), 471-487.

Pope, S. (2017). The Feminization of Sports Fandom: A Sociological Study (1st ed.). London: Routledge.

Popp, B., & Woratschek, H. (2016). Introducing branded communities in sport for building strong brand relations in social media. *Sport Management Review, 19*(2), 183-197.

Rao, L. (2015). WhatsApp hits 900 million users. Retrieved from http://fortune.com/2015/09/04/whatsapp-900-million-users/

Robertson, R. (1990). Mapping the Global Condition: Globalization as the Central Concept. *Theory, Culture & Society, 7*(2), 15-30.

Shirky, C. (2011). The Political Power of Social Media: Technology, the Public Sphere, and Political Change. *Foreign Affairs, 90*(1), 28-41.

Taylor, I. (1971). 'Football Mad' - a speculative sociology of soccer hooliganism. In E. Dunning (Ed.), *The Sociology of Sport* (pp. 352-377). London: Cass.

Toffoletti, K., & Mewett, P. (Eds.). (2012). *Sport and Its Female Fans* (1st ed.). London: Routledge.

Tomlinson, J. (1999). *Globalization and Culture* (1st ed.). Cambridge: Polity.

Urry, J. (2008). Moving on the Mobility Turn. In W. Canzler, V. Kaufmann, & S. Kesselring (Eds.), *Tracing Mobilities: Towards a Cosmopolitan Perspective* (1st ed., pp. 13-23). Aldershot: Ashgate.

Walsh, A. J., & Giulianotti, R. (2001). This Sporting Mammon: A normative critique of the commodification of sport. *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport, 18*, 53-77.

Watkins, R. D., Denegri-Knott, J., & Molesworth, M. (2016). The relationship between ownership and possession: Observations from the context of digital virtual goods. *Journal of Marketing Management, 32*(1/2), 44-70.